

I have seen the dedication and hard work of FEMA professionals who provide relief to victims of disasters. But the unending string of disasters is stretching the fabric of emergency response systems across the nation. The pain and financial hardship that they cost the American people can be seen in headlines across the country.

We in Congress must do our part to enable FEMA to do more without diminishing the support of communities before, during, and after disasters.

No one was prepared for five days of sub-freezing temperatures, ice- and snow-covered roads, and a failed energy grid throughout the state of Texas.

Texas power providers, Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) and Entergy Corporation, did not provide the needed weatherization of power generating and delivery equipment after being warned in 2011 after a cold snap that the system would fail if these steps were not taken.

The number of additional deaths uses mortality data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to compare the number of deaths from all causes that were reported in Texas during and after the storm with the number of fatalities that are normally reported during ordinary conditions.

That method is known as "excess fatalities" and has been employed during other disasters, like the COVID-19 pandemic, to estimate related death tolls.

In the aftermath of the storm millions of Texans struggled with the effects of the deadly winter storm, people of color and low-income communities who were disproportionately affected by blackouts and burst pipes could now face the hardest journey to recovery, experts said.

Hurricane Harvey hit a thousand square mile of Texas, just as in the past when Ike struck, but the telling sign of Blue Tarp Roofs are only in low-income, black, and brown communities' years after the storms have passed.

In the past the tools and resources available to FEMA to support disaster response and recovery have been limited to meals, water, trap.

Local, tribal, territorial, and state governments had to make request for aid to be provided.

For more substantial assistance, government contracting, and awards must be put into place, which can take months and in some cases years to get resources to victims.

This is too much time for survivors to have to wait for help.

The historic winter weather exacerbated pre-existing disparities like poor infrastructure and lack of resources in marginalized communities. Black and Latino communities who were disproportionately hit by COVID-19 now must struggle to recover from one of the worst weather events to ever hit Texas.

The nine-county Houston metro area impacted by Hurricane Harvey covers 9,444 square miles, an area larger than five states. Including New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

Hurricane Harvey dropped 21 trillion gallons of rainfall on Texas and Louisiana, most of it on the Houston Metroplex.

At its peak on September 1, 2017, one-third of Houston was underwater.

Hurricane Harvey is the largest housing disaster to strike the U.S. in our nation's history.

Hurricane Harvey damaged 203,000 homes, of which 12,700 were destroyed.

These are not simply numbers, these are families. Son and daughters, mothers and fathers, friends, mentors, and caretakers, all who are deserving of ample disaster response and recovery efforts.

There was no way to pre-prepare for Hurricanes Harvey, Katrina, Ian, or any of the other major disaster event.

What we can do is learn as much as possible and apply those lessons to future disaster response and recovery efforts.

When there is a catastrophic event, like Hurricane Harvey, there are important and valuable lessons that can help us to meet future challenges.

My constituents in Houston understand that our capacity to deal with hurricanes directly reflects our ability to respond to a terrorist attack in Texas or New York, an earthquake in California, or a nationwide pandemic.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared that COVID-19 was a pandemic, which had by that date reached at least 114 countries, sickening over 100,000 people, and killing more than 4,000.

It is the duty of Congress to make sure that FEMA is prepared to meet any challenge while bringing equity to the response made during disasters.

The work of the FEMA Office of Disaster Recovery and the Office of Disaster Recovery are critical when disaster strikes and for this reason, they should be a permanent part of the agency.

This is one of the reasons, I introduced the FEMA Modernization Act (H.R. 3060) in the 116th Congress.

H.R. 3060:

makes permanent the FEMA Office of Disaster Response and the FEMA Office of Disaster Recovery;

creates an ombudsman for each office to assist survivors and victims';

establishes a new National Disaster Medical Triage Capacity and an Incident Medical Recovery Management Team to set best practices for Advanced Trauma Life Support capabilities, enable medical evaluations, and assess health impacts that result from disasters;

creates an office of ombudsman to work within the agency to create equity and access; provides for accurate reporting on deaths and missing persons; and

reports data on effective casework management for the provision of survivor benefits and services.

All survivors of disaster deserve a fair chance at obtaining disaster recovery and relief. We owe it to those who were ripped from their homes and left with nothing.

This bill provides the program support that is needed, since there is nowhere in the United States immune from disaster.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CARTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 8416, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROSENDALE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

VACATING DEMAND FOR THE YEAS AND NAYS ON S. 533, GUIDANCE CLARITY ACT OF 2021

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the ordering of the yeas and nays on the motion that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 533) to require a guidance clarity statement on certain agency guidance, and for other purposes, be vacated, to the end that the motion be considered as withdrawn.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO SUSPEND THE RULES AND PASS CERTAIN BILLS

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, pursuant to section 2 of House Resolution 1464, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bills: H.R. 4275, H.R. 5502, H.R. 5721, H.R. 6290, H.R. 7277, H.R. 7299, and H.R. 8416.

The Clerk read the title of the bills.

The text of the bills are as follows:

ENSURING PHONE AND INTERNET ACCESS THROUGH LIFELINE AND AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM ACT OF 2022

H.R. 4275

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Ensuring Phone and Internet Access Through Lifeline and Affordable Connectivity Program Act of 2022".

SEC. 2. REPORTS ON ENROLLMENT IN CERTAIN PROGRAMS.

(a) ANNUAL REPORT ON ENROLLMENT IN LIFELINE AND AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAMS THROUGH QUALIFYING PROGRAMS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for 2 calendar years after the calendar year during which the first report is submitted under this subsection, the Commission shall submit to Congress a report on—

(1) enrollment in the Lifeline program by individuals participating in each of the Lifeline qualifying programs, broken out by each of the Lifeline qualifying programs, to the extent the Commission holds or has access to the necessary data relating to such enrollment; and

(2) enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program by individuals participating in each of the Affordable Connectivity Program qualifying programs, broken out by each of the Affordable Connectivity Program qualifying programs, to the extent the Commission holds or has access to the necessary data relating to such enrollment.

(b) GAO STUDY AND REPORT ON EFFORTS TO PROMOTE ENROLLMENT IN LIFELINE AND AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAMS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to Congress identifying outreach and publicity efforts to promote participation and enrollment in the Lifeline program and, separately, the Affordable Connectivity Program.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM QUALIFYING PROGRAM.—The term "Affordable